

## CLAIMS

1. A method for protecting electronic files, comprising:
  - obtaining environment information regarding a computer, the environment information including data concerning an operating environment of the computer;
  - 5 generating an encryption key based on the environment information; and
  - encrypting an electronic file using the encryption key.
2. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the operation of creating a decryption key based on environment information, wherein the decryption key 10 can be utilized to decrypt the electronic file.
3. A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the encryption key and the decryption key are public key infrastructure (PKI) based keys.
- 15 4. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the environment information includes location information of the computer.
5. A method as recited in claim 4, wherein the location information specifies a location of the computer within a predetermined range.

11. A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the access duration is a time range indicating a time period when the electronic file can be accessed.

12. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the electronic file cannot be decrypted at a time outside the time range.

13. A method as recited in claim 10, wherein the access duration is a date range indicating a range of dates when the electronic file can be accessed.

10 14. A method as recited in claim 13, wherein the electronic file cannot be decrypted at a date outside the date range.

15. A method for protecting electronic files, comprising:

storing an electronic file encrypted using an encryption key, wherein the 15 encryption key is generated using a first environment profile of a computer, and wherein the environment profile includes data concerning an operating environment of the computer;

obtaining a second environment profile of the computer based on a current operating environment of the computer;

21. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the environment profile includes location information specifying a location of the computer within a predetermined range.

5 22. A method as recited in claim 21, wherein the location information is provided by global positioning satellite (GPS) data.

23. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the environment information includes drive information regarding a drive wherein the electronic file will be stored.

10 24. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the environment information includes time information specifying access duration, wherein the access duration is a time range indicating a time period when the electronic file can be accessed.

15 25. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the environment information includes date information specifying access duration, wherein the access duration is a date range indicating dates that the electronic file can be accessed.

26. A method for protecting electronic files, comprising:

30. A method as recited in claim 26, further comprising the operation of creating a decryption key based on environment information, wherein the decryption key can be utilized to decrypt the electronic file.

5 31. A method as recited in claim 30, wherein the encryption key and the decryption key are public key infrastructure (PKI) based keys.

10 32. A method as recited in claim 26, wherein the environment information includes location information specifying a location of the computer within a predetermined range.

15 33. A method as recited in claim 32, wherein the location information is provided by global positioning satellite (GPS) data.

34. A method as recited in claim 26, wherein the environment information includes drive information regarding a drive wherein the electronic file will be stored.

20 35. A method as recited in claim 26, wherein the environment information includes time information specifying access duration, wherein the access duration is a time range indicating a time period when the electronic file can be accessed.